

COMMUNICATION WITH JUDGES

In order to provide a fair and neutral forum in the court setting, judges are not allowed to discuss cases with attorneys or debtors or other parties in a case unless all the parties to the case are present. Any communication regarding a case should not be made by contacting the judge directly but made either during an official court hearing where all parties are present or by filing a pleading with the clerk of the court. For the same reason, direct communication with judicial law clerks is not appropriate. There may be an exception to the rule against direct communication with a judge in the case of settlement conferences. While acting as a settlement judge, private meetings with parties may occur in order to discuss settlement. However, in the interest of fairness, the judge acting as a settlement judge will not be the judge assigned to make decisions regarding the case.

The process for requesting that a judge take action in a case is to file a motion or other pleading in the case. Such requests for action must be made in the form required by court rules and should clearly describe the relief requested and the reason why the relief is appropriate. Any motion or other pleading filed with the court should not contain offensive, insulting or inappropriate language.

Information regarding filing pleadings is set out in local rules available on the court's Web site. If an attorney or party has a question regarding the procedure to file a motion or request, the question may be directed to the clerk's office. The clerk's office cannot provide legal advice but may give procedural advice as to how to file pleadings. Questions or information regarding possible fraud in a case should be directed to the Office of the United States Trustee. Information regarding the United States Trustee may be found on the court's Web site under Contacts.